(c) Freight carried by Railways in the last three years is :

1992-93	350.05 million tonnes
1993-94	358.72 million tonnes
1994-95	364.96 million tonnes

No reliable data is avialable on the volume of the freight carried by roads and thus it may not be possible to estimate the loss of foreign exchange on this account.

(d) Does not arise.

Late running of EMU Train between Katwa and Bandel

3020. SHRI MEHBOOB ZAHEDI : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the fact that passengers are agitated due to late running of EMU services between Katwa and Bandel;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that the track between katwa and Bandel has not been improved;

(c) if so, the details thereof;

(d) whether any steps are being taken to improve the entire track for fast moving of EMU trains; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) Some complaints have been received in this regard.

(b) to (e). The works for improvement of track have already been taken up. The track has already been strengthened and made fit for running of fast moving EMU trains between Km. 0.00 (Bandel) to Km. 60.00. Further track renewal works for 30 Km. length between Km. 60.00 to 90.00 have alrady been sanctioned, where track improvement works have been taken up and 10 Km. length of track will be renewed in current year. Further 15 Km. length of track between Km. 98.00 to 105.00 (Katwa) is proposed for sanction in year 1997-98. This will cover the entire Bandel-Katwa section.

Supply of Uniforms to RPF Personnel

3021. SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : Wwill the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel of South-Eastern Railway have not been supplied uniform (clothing) for about six years;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the RPF personnel are being paid the amount for uniform;

(d) if so the amount paid to each RPF personnel during the above period;

(e) if not the reasons therefor; and

(f) the number of RPF personnel who have been chargesheeted and punished for wearing improper uniform in South-Eastern Railway in particular and Indian Railways in general?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) and (b). No, Sir. The RPF personnel of S.E. Railway have not been supplied uniform (clothing) since only 1994 on account of rejection by the Inspection Committee of uniform supplied by one supplier, for being inferior, sub-standard and in short measures.

(c) to (e). No amount has been paid to the RPF personnel in lieu of uniform (clothing) by the Railway Administration as no such provision exists.

(f) The number of RPF personnel chargesheeted/ punished for wearing improper uniform on S.E. Rly. and on other Zonal Railways during the last six years is as under :-

S.E. Railway	-	8
Other Railways	-	184

Policy For Industrial Workers

3022. SHRI RAMESH CHENNITHALA : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether a comprehensive exit policy has been formulated for the Industrial Workers; and

(b) if so, the main factor thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI M. ARUNACHALAM): (a) and (b). The policy regarding "exit" or 'closure' of an industrial establishment or a part thereof and retrenchment of workers is contained in the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947. The Act provides for certain measures of protection to the workers in the event of lay off, retrenchment and closure.

Selling of Monthly Tickets

3023. SHRI HARADHAN ROY : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that at Panagarh Station of Eastern Railway, monthly tickets are not sold to passengers for stations falling between Panagarh to Howrah *via* Main;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the revenue for monthly tickets at Panagarh station has drastically gone down as the passengers via Main are denied tickets;

(d) if so, the amount of loss for the Eastern Railway for the above reason for the period for which such tickets have been stopped to be sold; and

(e) if not, the amount and number of monthly tickets sold during the last two years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ) : (a) and (b). Season tickets are issued for various stations from Panagarh on Panagarh-Howrah section via Main upto a distance of 150 Kms.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) 1095 season tickets giving an earning of Rs. 1.49 lakhs during 1994-95 and 1095 season tickets giving an earning of Rs. 1.69 lakhs during 1995-96 were issued at Panagarh for different stations on Panagarh-Howrah section via Main.

Licensed Porters

3024. SHRI JAGDAMBI PRASAD YADAV : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the official strength of Licensed Porters, as on August 15, 1994 at Itwari, Kanhan, Kamptee, Bhandara Road, Tumsar Road and Tirora stations of the South Eastern Railway, Station-wise;

(b) the additional number of Licensed Porters were recruited for each station mentioned in (a) above to handle parcel traffic with effect from September 1,1994;

(c) whether Railway Board had issued instructions to abolish contract system for Parcel handing work, where contractors demanded revision in rates due to increase in Labour rates and have the work managed by recruiting licensed porters; and

(d) if not, the time by which the General Manager, South Eastern Railway propose to introduce new system of working?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI SATPAL MAHARAJ): (a) the official strength of Licensed Porters as on 15.8.94 is as under:

Itwari	7	Kanhan	NIL
Kamptee	8	Bhandara Road	5
Tumsar Road	8	Tirora	NIL

(b) The additional number of licensed porters engaged at these station with effect from September 1,1994 is as under:

Itwari	33	Kanhan	4
Kamptee	16	Bhandara Road	16
Tumsar Road	16	Tirora	8

(c) and (d). No instructions have been issued by the Board to abolish the contract system for parcel handling work. At some station on South Eastern Railway licensed porters are being utilised to handle parcel traffic in addition to their normal function of carrying passengers luggage.

[Translation]

Package for Rural Telephone Subscribers

3025. SHRI SANTOSH KUMAR GANGWAR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the package announced by the former Minister of Communications in December, 1995 for the rural telephone subscribers;

(b) the progress made in this regard so far; and

(c) the reasons for the delay?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA) : (a) The information is given in the enclosed statement.

(b) and (c). Most of the features of the rural package have been implemented in almost all parts of the country.

The salient features of the package announced in November. 1995 are as under :

1. Free calls have been increased to 250 from present 150 per billing cycle for rural subscribers.
2. Registration fee for new connections has been reduced to Rs. 1000/- from existing Rs. 2000/- for rural subscribers working from exchange systems of below 10,000 lines.
3. Telephone rental has been reduced to Rs. 100/- bimonthly from existing Rs. 150/- for rural subscribers of exchange systems of 100 lines to below 1000 lines.
4. The installation charges for telephone connections in telephone exchanges of less than 500 lines shall be maintained at Rs. 300/- upto 31.3.1998 for all rural subscribers.
5. Call charges for 200 calls above 250 free calls have been reduced by 25% for rural subscribers.
6. Commission payable to franchisees of local and STD PCOs in Panchayats and PCOs provided under Panchayat Sanchar Sewa Yojna has been increased from present 20% to 50% on gross turnover.
7. The STD/ISD PCO franchisees in rural areas are to be paid commission @ 25% on the gross turnover per month.
8. In non-rural areas of the predominantly hilly states of J&K, Himachal Pradesh, Garhwal and Kumaon hill areas of U.P. Sikkim and 7 North Eastern States (Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura) as well as in the Hilly/ tribal areas of the rest of the country, the franchisees are to be paid commission @ 20% on a gross turnover upto 50,000/- and